

# *Strategic Plan 2026-2030*



## **Our guide to decision-making, resource allocation, and service delivery**

May 7, 2026



## Overview

In late 2025 and early 2026, the Village of Maple Bluff engaged in a strategic planning process intended to guide decision-making, resource allocation, and service delivery over the next five years. The process and this resulting *Strategic Plan 2026-2030* are designed to ensure that the Village remains well positioned to maintain high-quality municipal services while responding to evolving operational, financial, and regional conditions.

The process was informed by:

- Intentional community and stakeholder input, including a community survey, resident focus group, business and intergovernmental outreach, and Village committee meetings.
- Background research documented in a separate *Current Conditions and Trends* report, intended to support both the strategic planning effort and a future update to the Village's 20-year *Comprehensive Plan*.
- Village Board direction. This featured a half-day strategic planning retreat in February 2026, which culminated in adoption of a Mission, Vision, Values, and a set of Priorities. In Spring 2026, the Board adopted Goals and then this *Strategic Plan 2026-2030*.

## Terms

The following are terms used during this process and in this *Strategic Plan 2026-2030*. Common understanding and use of these terms aided with communication, clarified expectations, ensure internal consistency, and will support progress monitoring.

- **Mission.** The Village's core purpose and responsibilities—why we exist.
- **Vision.** The aspirational future state the Village is striving to create.
- **Value.** A core principle that guides our conduct, decisions, and expectations. (The Village's four values are listed on the bottom of the next page.)
- **Priority.** A broad mid-term commitment that reflects a strategic shift from the status quo and guides Village direction over the next two to five years. Each Priority establishes a community-wide direction. Over the term of the *Strategic Plan 2026-2030*, the Village may have to decline pursuing other optional assignments to achieve its Priorities.
- **Goal.** A targeted and actionable outcome that aligns with a specific Priority; follows the SMART model (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-based, Time-bound); reflects the operational realities of a small, service-oriented municipal government; and is achievable within the Village's staffing capacity and planning horizon.
- **Objective.** A supporting element of a Goal that breaks it down into manageable components and clarifies how it is to be achieved.

The Maple Bluff Village Board and administration appreciates your engagement in the community and invites you to read on to learn about our strategic plan for the next five years!

### **Our Mission**

The Village of Maple Bluff will provide responsible, high-quality municipal services and transparent governance that protects public safety, stewards community resources, and preserves the sense of place, distinctive character, and independence of our community.

### **Our Vision**

Maple Bluff will maintain its identity as an attractive, safe, friendly, and walkable lakeside community. The Village's character will continue to be defined by our proximity to Lake Mendota, generous green spaces and recreation opportunities, and unique and connected neighborhoods.

### **Our Priorities**

1. Ensure long-term financial sustainability through cost efficiency and disciplined levy management.
2. Strengthen workforce stability through proactive retention and succession planning.
3. Activate the Gateway corridor to improve safety, mobility, and Village identity.
4. Implement systematic engagement with Madison and surrounding agencies.



**Safe. Welcoming. Responsible. Independent.**

April 2026

## Priority 1—Ensure Long-Term Financial Sustainability Through Cost Efficiency and Disciplined Levy Management

### Goal 1.A

Beginning with the development of the 2027 budget (i.e., by November 2026), the Village Board will review and adopt a four-to-six-year financial planning framework projecting operating revenues, expenditures, wage growth, and levy impacts.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Establish and utilize baseline assumptions for revenues, wages, benefits, inflation, debt obligations, and service-related expenditures
- II. Strive for consistency with and advancement of the Village’s adopted Mission, Vision, and Values
- III. Incorporate implementation of Priorities 1-4 into the planning framework
- IV. Develop a model that can be updated annually without requiring a complete rebuild
- V. Incorporate a handful of different scenarios, such as stable conditions, moderate cost escalation, and increased service demand
- VI. Establish an annual update schedule aligned with the budget cycle, and course-correct based on learning from the previous year’s exercise

### Goal 1.B

By July 2027, Village staff will complete a wage competitiveness and labor market analysis to inform long-term financial planning across departments.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Identify relevant regional labor market benchmarks and comparison organizations
- II. Evaluate wage competitiveness across departments and key positions
- III. Integrate labor market conditions into long-range financial assumptions
- IV. Present the analysis to the Board as part of financial planning framework discussions

### **Goal 1.C**

By October 2027, Village staff will identify operational efficiencies or financial management improvements that support long-term fiscal sustainability without materially reducing service quality.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Review major operating cost drivers across departments
- II. Evaluate purchasing practices, service delivery methods, and financial policies for potential efficiencies
- III. Prioritize improvements that are recurring and sustainable rather than one-time measures
- IV. Document the projected impact of identified improvements for Village Board review as part of financial planning framework discussions

### **Goal 1.D**

By January 2028, the Village Board will establish a decision framework identifying indicators, planning timelines, and communication considerations related to structural funding needs, including potential levy adjustments or referenda.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Articulate major funding gaps or service pressures
- II. Define the information for review and criteria the Board should use when evaluating future levy adjustments, including the Village's Mission, Vision, and Values
- III. Establish activity timelines relative to election cycles and budget development
- IV. Develop guiding communication principles for discussing long-term financial sustainability and the potential for a November 2028 referendum with residents

## Priority 2—Strengthen Workforce Stability Through Proactive Retention and Succession Planning

### Goal 2.A

By March 2027, Village staff will complete a workforce stability and succession planning assessment identifying anticipated retirements, recruitment risks, and leadership development needs across all departments.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Identify positions with anticipated retirements or turnover risks within five years
- II. Identify positions where departure would significantly impact service continuity
- III. Assess internal successor candidates and readiness across departments
- IV. Identify broad approaches for external recruitment where internal candidates may not be obvious or interested
- V. Develop a workforce risk profile based on analysis of retirements, turnover risks, impact to service continuity, internal successor capacity, department readiness, and external recruitment opportunities

### Goal 2.B

By July 2027, the Village Board will review the workforce stability and succession planning assessment across Administration, Police, Fire Rescue, Public Works, and Recreation Departments.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Review department-level workforce risk findings
- II. Identify high-risk positions requiring proactive recruitment planning
- III. Consider internal leadership development opportunities
- IV. Evaluate workforce trends affecting long-term service continuity

### Goal 2.C

By October 2027, Village staff will establish an annual review process for staffing stability and succession planning, beginning with development of the 2028 budget.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Identify staffing risks affecting operational continuity
- II. Evaluate impacts of staffing transitions on service delivery and budget volatility

- III. Integrate staffing considerations into long-term financial planning
- IV. Establish a recurring schedule for Board awareness and review

**Goal 2.D**

By January 2028, Village staff will implement targeted retention or succession strategies addressing critical workforce risks.

*Objectives*

- I. Develop leadership development or cross-training strategies where appropriate
- II. Identify recruitment planning approaches for anticipated vacancies
- III. Address organizational resilience beyond single-position dependencies
- IV. Track progress toward improving workforce continuity

**Goal 2.E**

By May 2028, the Village Board will evaluate organizational structure considerations affecting long-term leadership continuity and operational capacity.

*Objectives*

- I. Identify structural questions affecting leadership capacity and service continuity
- II. Evaluate operational and administrative implications of potential structural adjustments
- III. Assess organizational resilience related to leadership transitions
- IV. Determine whether additional planning or study is warranted

## Priority 3—Activate the Gateway Corridor to Improve Safety, Mobility, and Village Identity

### Goal 3.A

By November 2026, the Village Board will endorse an updated conceptual streetscape plan that focuses on substantial traffic and streetscape improvements within the two-block segment of North Sherman Avenue between Commercial Avenue and Oxford Place (“North Sherman Improvements”), and fund detailed engineering design for such North Sherman Improvements for 2027.

#### Objectives

- I. Review the North Sherman Improvements from the 2017 *Gateway Redevelopment Concept and Implementation Strategy Plan* (“*Gateway Plan*”)
- II. Gather updated community and stakeholder (e.g., nearby businesses and residents) input on design options for the North Sherman Improvements
- III. Consider general engineering, cost, municipal service delivery, traffic movement, parking, and other practical impacts of different North Sherman Improvement design options
- IV. Identify and pursue funding for design and construction of the North Sherman Improvements, potentially including grants and funds from Tax Increment District (“TID”) #1 as now configured or with potential changes
- V. Coordinate North Sherman Improvement construction timing and logistics with City of Madison Engineering staff, including relative to the anticipated upgrade of other segments of North Sherman Avenue and bike system enhancements
- VI. Following Board endorsement of an updated concept plan, include in the 2027 Village budget funds for the Village Engineer to complete detailed engineering design plans and to manage bidding for the North Sherman Improvements

### Goal 3.B

By September 2027, the Village Board will adopt an updated *Gateway Plan* and make any advised TID #1 changes to include the endorsed North Sherman Improvement concept, identify and fund private redevelopment/enhancement opportunities, and merge with an anticipated update to the Village’s *Comprehensive Plan* per State requirements.

#### Objectives

- I. Include in 2027 Village budget funds to complete an updated *Gateway Plan* as part of the required 10-year update to the Village’s *Comprehensive Plan*, and to make 2026-advised TID #1 changes

- II. Prioritize safety, mobility, Village identity, and economic impact for the Gateway, and advancement of Village’s mission, vision, and values throughout the community
- III. Update the enhancement and redevelopment plan for private property in the Gateway area
- IV. Incorporate further opportunities for community involvement in the *Plan* update process
- V. Establish phased and realistic timeline for *Plan* implementation, consistent with Village’s fiscal and staffing capacity, as may be enhanced by grants
- VI. Update, extend, close and replace, or take other recommended action(s) on TID #1 as a Gateway Plan and North Sherman Improvements funding tool

**Goal 3.C**

By February 2028, the Village Engineer will complete detailed engineering plans for the North Sherman Improvements and lead bidding and coordination for such Improvements, following Village Board authorization.

*Objectives*

- I. Use the endorsed concept plan for the North Sherman Improvements and the updated Gateway Plan as the basis for the North Sherman Improvement engineering plans
- II. Incorporate vehicular (car, bus, bike) travel way improvements, pedestrian movement and crossing improvements, and aesthetic and place-making enhancements in consultation with a landscape architect or urban designer
- III. Coordinate with City of Madison Engineering staff, including on timing relative to other North Sherman improvements and provisions or detours during construction
- IV. Finalize North Sherman Improvement construction funding, including grants
- V. Prepare and manage a public bidding process for the North Sherman Improvements
- VI. Execute a resident, business, and community information strategy

**Goal 3.D**

By December 2028, a Village-hired contractor, under the direction of the Village Engineer and Director of Public Works, will complete construction of the North Sherman Improvements.

*Objectives*

- I. Secure and allocate project funding
- II. Manage and inspect the work of the contractors completing the North Sherman Improvements

- III. Ensure proper business, resident, and through-traffic access and communication during reconstruction

### **Goal 3.E**

By December 2030, the Village Planner will work with property owner(s) and/or developer(s) to attempt at least one major private property enhancement or redevelopment effort in the Gateway area.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Identify the most promising candidate(s) for substantial property upgrade or redevelopment in a manner that advances the updated *Gateway Plan* and TID objectives
- II. Guide an effort to achieve property upgrade or redevelopment, including coordination with current property owner(s) and neighbors, assessment of funding sources, developer recruitment, and zoning entitlements if possible

## Priority 4—Implement Systematic Engagement with Madison and Surrounding Agencies

### Goal 4.A

By January 2027, Village staff will establish a framework for systematic engagement with the City of Madison (and its various departments, leaders, and neighborhood organizations) and other regional partners affecting Maple Bluff.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Identify key external agencies and organizations
- II. Define priority coordination opportunities and issues important to Maple Bluff
- III. Establish internal Village points of contact, which may vary by agency or issue
- IV. Create a structure for documenting and tracking engagement, including where success is obvious and not

### Goal 4.B

By April 2027, Village staff and Trustees will initiate or continue regular coordination with the City of Madison (and its various departments, leaders, and neighborhood organizations) and other key regional partners regarding issues affecting Maple Bluff.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Address immediate cross-boundary issues requiring coordination
- II. Document coordination outcomes and follow-up actions
- III. Ensure engagement aligns with the Village's Mission, Vision, Values, and Priorities

### Goal 4.C

By July 2027, Village staff will establish and maintain a standing tracker of regional issues affecting Maple Bluff.

#### *Objectives*

- I. Define issue categories
- II. Track key developments, contacts, and status updates
- III. Integrate tracking into administrative review processes
- IV. Maintain continuity of institutional awareness
- V. Share tracker with Village Board and communicate to community via Village website and other means

#### **Goal 4.D**

By October 2027, Village staff will begin periodic updates to the Village Board summarizing regional coordination efforts and emerging issues affecting the community.

##### *Objectives*

- I. Establish a recurring reporting schedule
- II. Summarize major private development projects in the Maple Bluff area
- III. Identify opportunities and risks
- IV. Maintain Board awareness while preserving operational flexibility

#### **Goal 4.E**

By January 2028, Village staff will pursue improvements in communication and coordination with surrounding agencies regarding issues that affect Maple Bluff.

##### *Objectives*

- I. Identify areas where coordination gaps currently exist
- II. Prioritize areas where improved communication would have practical value
- III. Work with partner agencies to explore improved coordination practices
- IV. Document progress and remaining challenges

### **Implementation**

Implementation of this *Strategic Plan 2026-2030* will require focus, hard work, and resources from the Village Board, Village staff, and the Maple Bluff community. The Village Administrator will lead development of tools to detail, implement, and delegate assignments to achieve the priorities, goals, and objectives. The Administrator will also be responsible for regular reporting to and interaction with the Village Board to track progress, identify hurdles, and brainstorm solutions to assure reasonable *Plan* implementation. The Village Board may adjust priorities as it deems appropriate.

## Acknowledgements

### Village Board of Trustees

Kevin O'Driscoll, Village President  
Lillian Bickers, Village Trustee  
Greg Engle, Village Trustee  
Kristine Jaeger, Village Trustee  
Eric McLeod, Village Trustee  
Laura Peck, Village Trustee  
Jim Schuler, Village Trustee  
Mike Wittenwyler, Former Village Trustee

### Strategic Plan Core Team

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